

ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND

AND THE GREAT CENTRAL CAMPAIGN

The Important Position of Kentucky and Tennessee.

By JOHN MCLEROY.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MARCH TO PERRYVILLE.

The Army reorganized at Louisville—Selec-
tion of Divisions—The Army of the Cumberland
Dust Marches Over the Kentucky
Pikes—Suffering From Thirst—Fighting
for Water Pools—Both Generals
Mistake the Other's Plans—Eve of Battle.

The result of the bold advance of Bragg and Kirby Smith had been to gain for the Confederacy all of Kentucky from the Cumberland River eastward to the Big Sandy. The Union troops held only the small area occupied by their camps in front of Cincinnati and Louisville. The co-operating movement of Price and Van Dorn west of the Cumberland had not been so fortunate, by any means. In Gen. Grant they had found a commander of very different mettle from Buell, and the defeat at Iuka had been followed by a bloody and disastrous repulse at Corinth, Oct. 3 and 4, when Price and Van Dorn only saved their shattered forces from capture by the narrowest chance. These events occurred at the time when Buell was moving out from Louisville to push his antagonists back and recover the country. He had received very sharp spurring from Washington to set him in motion thus early. Halleck was particularly alarmed lest Bragg should suddenly drop Louisville and throw himself, with Kirby Smith's forces, on Cincinnati, and by an unexpected and quick stroke seize by far the largest and wealthiest city in the West at that time. This would be a fine return blow for the capture of New Orleans and other smaller cities.

Buell was unfortunate in the subordinate with whom he commanded the campaign. A great mistake had been made in separating the ablest General in the army, Gen. George H. Thomas, from his corps, and making him second in command, which deprived him of all active direction of execution. He became, in fact, merely an Inspector-General, who did not even know his commanding officer's plans, and therefore could not aid in their execution as much as any one of the subordinates. McCook, who commanded the First Corps of the Army of the Ohio, was with all his undoubted gallantry, loyalty and soldierly qualities, unfit for so extensive a command. He lacked the mental breadth as well as the iron will and determination absolutely necessary for the command of so great a unit as a corps. Moreover, he had an undue opinion of his abilities, and really aspired to succeed Buell as the commander of the Army of the Ohio. This ambition led to serious consequences.

C. C. Gilbert, a "provisional Major-General," who commanded the Second Corps, was a man whose soldier abilities had not been expanded, to say the least, by his career as Captain. He was a narrow-minded martinet, slavishly devoted to precedent and regulations, unable to rise above the letter of orders or rules, and, moreover, fearfully jealous of McCook.

Maj.-Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden, who commanded the Third Corps, had been a fairly able Kentucky lawyer, with no qualifications for command except courage and loyalty. He knew little of the higher branches of the art of war and did not care to learn. He was without initiative, and never did anything on the battlefield or off it that had not been previously suggested to him.

There were many good men among the division commanders, but they were all more or less afflicted with consuming jealousy of one another. They had not yet been long enough together to have their relative merits worked out in actual practice and proper decisions arrived at. Undoubtedly Rousseau was the ablest of these, and had emerged from the ordeal of battle. The other division commanders who had mostly risen to Brigadier-Generalcies from Captaincies in the Regular Army, all had more or less burning jealousies of his prominence, and Gen. Jackson was particularly jealous of Rousseau. Jackson, then in his 41st year, had not been in the Regular Army, but had seen service in the Mexican War, rising to the rank of First Lieutenant. He was a hot-tempered, pugnacious leader of the loyal mountaineers of eastern Kentucky, who had elected him to Congress. He resigned his seat to accept a Brigadier-Generalcy. He was a keen rival

his Corps Commander, McCook, to assign him to a position as far as possible from Rousseau, and McCook was weak enough to comply. Gen. Sheridan, who only managed to get command of a division by an appeal to Buell, gave little hint at that time of his future greatness. He had been Commissary on Halleck's staff in Missouri, and as Colonel of the 2d Mich. Cav., had distinguished himself by a brilliant dash at Booneville, which, with Halleck's favor, had brought him the star to replace the eagle which had only newly lighted on his shoulders.

The Commanders Mistake Each Other's Plans.

From the first both commanders had mistaken each other's positions and intentions. Gen. Buell had put two divisions under the command of Gen. Sill, who was detached from McCook's Corps and moved in the direction of Lexington to cover Cincinnati and protect the left of the army. Bragg was so poorly informed as to imagine that Buell had extended his whole main along a front of about 60 miles, so as

to cover with it both Louisville and Cincinnati. Therefore, Bragg formed the customary plan of attacking this disjointed line at different points and overwhelming it. From the very first the policy of the rebels had been the sound military one of opposing masses to frontal attacks, of making their units much heavier and stronger than the Union units. Their brigades were always heavier than the Union brigades, and consequently also their divisions and corps. We find this illustrated as early as the first battle of Bull Run, where their brigades were from four to six regiments, while three was the customary number for the Union brigades. Bragg followed this sound policy in the reorganization of his army, which took place while he was waiting for Buell to move out from Louisville. He divided his army into two corps—a right, under Gen. E. Kirby Smith, and a left, under Gen. Leonidas Polk. Each of these corps had only three divisions, but each of those divisions had at least 8,000 muskets, possibly more, while the Union troops averaged much less than 6,000 muskets to a division. Bragg ordered Polk to advance from Harrodsburg, strike Buell's left flank and roll it up, while Smith should attack in front from Frankfort.

On the other hand, Buell believed that Bragg was in his immediate front in force, and would offer battle with his whole army. Therefore, Buell moved forward slowly and cautiously, keeping all three of his corps fairly abreast and within easy supporting distance. Polk was better informed as to these dispositions of the Union commander, and therefore disobeyed Bragg's order to attack, thereby saving himself from defeat and destruction. Instead, he swung around the River, which was an important tributary of the Kentucky, and Buell felt sure that Bragg would make his stand somewhere behind the Dicks River to cover these exceedingly important depots.

The following is the official roster of the organization of the Army of the Ohio as it marched out of Louisville under Buell, Oct. 1, 1862:

Army of the Ohio.
Maj.-Gen. Don Carlos Buell.
Maj.-Gen. George H. Thomas.
Escort—Anderson Troop, Lieut. Thos. S. Maple; 4th U. S. Cav. (six companies).
Unattached—7th Pa. Cav. (four companies), Maj. John E. Wynkoop.
First Corps.
Maj.-Gen. Alexander McD. McCook.
Third Division.
Brig.-Gen. Lovell H. Rousseau.
Ninth Brigade—Col. Leonard A. Harris—38th Ind., Col. Benjamin F. Scribner—2d Ohio, Lieut. John Kell; 33d Ohio, Lieut. Col. Oscar F. Moore, Maj. Frederick J. Lock; 94th Ohio, Col. Joseph W. Frizell; 10th Wis., Col. Alfred R. Chapin; 5th Ind. Battery, Capt. Peter Simonson.
Seventeenth Brigade—Col. William H. Lytle, Col. Curran Pope—42d Ind., Col. James G. Jones; 88th Ind., Col. George Humphrey; 15th Ky., Col. Curran Pope; 3d Ohio, Col. John Seavoy; 10th Ohio, Lieut. Col. Joseph W. Burke; 1st Mich. Battery, Capt. Cyrus O. Loomis.
Twenty-eighth Brigade—Col. John C. Starkweather—24th Ill., Capt. August Mauff; 79th Pa., Col. Henry A. Hambruff; 1st Wis., Lieut. Col. George B. Bingham; 21st Wis., Col. Benjamin J. Bush; 1st Ind. Battery, Capt. Asahel K. Bush; 1st Ky. Battery, Capt. David C. Stone.
Unattached—2d Ky. Cav. (six companies), Col. Buckner Board—Cos. A, C and H, 1st Mich. Engineers and Mechanics, Maj. Enoch Hopkins.
Tenth Division.
Brig.-Gen. James S. Jackson.
Thirty-third Brigade—Brig.-Gen. William R. Terrill, Col. Albert S. Hall; 80th Ill., Col. Thomas G. Allen; 123d Ill., Col. James Monroe; 1st Ohio, Col. Oscar F. Harmon; 52d Ohio, Lieut. Col. D. D. T. Cowen.
Thirty-seventh Brigade—Col. Nicholas Greusel—36th Ill., Capt. Silas Miller; 83d Ill., Col. Robert T. Sherman; 21st Mich., Col. Ambrose A. Stevens; 24th Wis., Col. Charles H. Larabee.
Artillery—I, 2d Ill., Capt. Charles M. Barnett; G, 1st Mo., Capt. Henry Heccock.
Cavalry.
Third Brigade—Capt. Ebenezer Gay—9th Ky. (detachment), Lieut. Col. John Boyle; 2d Mich., Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell; 19th Pa., Lieut. Col. Thos. C. Buell claims that he had in all about 61,000 men in the army, nearly equally divided among the three corps.

What Bragg Was Doing.
In the meanwhile Gen. Bragg and Kirby Smith were covering as much of the populous and fertile regions of Kentucky as possible, to gather up supplies and secure recruits. Of the former they secured an abundance, so much so that their movements were seriously embarrassed by the necessity of guarding the long trains of supplies and baggage. He moved to rush to his standard as soon as he should set it up as a signal of relief from the despotism of the Lincolnes. Instead of fighting for these long trains, Bragg was not able to get in enough new recruits to use more than half of those which had fallen from the hands of his killed, wounded and deserters, or that his army left Kentucky, he was thus weaker than when it entered the State.

Apparently Bragg and Kirby Smith did not expect that Buell would move out against them as soon as he did, nor that Gen. Polk was left at Harrodsburg with a small force to threaten Buell's flank when he moved out, while Bragg with Kirby Smith's forces were intended to encounter it. Kirby Smith, who had been ordered to decide that the flank attack was too risky, and instead withdrew by the way of Perryville toward Harrodsburg. At the time Bragg strongly approved of this, when he was making history only to suit himself, and he had no thought for it. Bragg had covered the whole of Buell's front with Wheeler's Cavalry and other mounted troops, which attacked the heads of the columns and should have kept Buell's army informed as to the progress of his enemy.

The Drouth in Kentucky.
The summer of 1862 was phenomenally dry in Kentucky, and the drouth there was long remembered. That part of the State is well supplied with well watered valleys, and the limestone, while this material makes excellent roads, it makes exceedingly dusty ones in midsummer. The march of the troops was made in clouds of penetrating dust, which tried the lungs, filled the nostrils and brought about an insupportable thirst. This condition had the most important influence upon subsequent events. All the creeks and rivers and branches were dried up into pools of standing, stagnant water, which were, however, eagerly sought by the dust-laden, tormented soldiers. McCook led his corps toward Perryville by the road which crossed the Blue River, the Green and Mackville. Gen. Gilbert moved his corps more directly east along the Springfield road. Crittenden led his corps across Gilbert's line of march on the road which lay due east from Lebanon to Danville. With this column was Gen. Thomas and the cavalry.

As the Union army advanced the night became frequent for these pools of water, which were bitterly contested on both sides, since both soldiers felt alike the scourge of the hot September rays and the parching thirst engendered by the stifling moisture.

On the night of Oct. 7, McCook reached Mackville, where the roads fork, one running east to Harrodsburg and thence to Bragg's great depot at Bryansville, which brought him near to Bryansville as the Confederates troops were turning at bay at Perryville, were at the same place. That evening a particularly stubborn fight occurred, in which Kirby Smith's forces, who were in the possession of some pools of stagnant water, McCook's nearness, on the direct road to Bryansville, made it seem imperative to the Confederate commanders to hold a second battle, at once, at which it was decided that McCook be struck quick and hard to throw him back and crush him before the rest of the army could get up.

Gen. Buell's Statement.
In his report to the War Department, under date of Nov. 8, 1862, Gen. Buell states the following statement of his march from Louisville to Perryville, and his arrival in Louisville and his movements until the eve of the battle of Perryville:

"I found in and about the city a considerable force of raw troops, hurriedly thrown in from Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, for the defense of the city against the formidable force that had

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once notified of the movement. The assault was principally on the right, on the Nineteenth Corps. It not now being taken by surprise, it gallantly repulsed the enemy.

"Thank God for that," said Sheridan. To one of his staff he said: "Tell Gen. Emory if they attack him again after this. We'll get a good twist on them, the tightest one they ever saw."

Holding Back the Attack.

Sheridan delayed the general attack for a time, until the greater part of the men who had gone to the rear in the morning had returned. About this time a report came in that Longstreet was moving to the support of Early, marching on Sheridan's left, on the Front Royal pike, thus getting into the rear of our army. This caused some uneasiness, giving color to the dispatch of the 15th from Longstreet: "Be ready to move as soon as you hear each other, and we will crush Sheridan."

At 4 p. m. the order went out: "The whole line will advance; the Nineteenth Corps will march in connection with the Sixth Corps. The right of the Nineteenth, swinging toward the left." The attack was gallantly made. The enemy sought protection behind stone fences and rail fences, but a very determined resistance, but Gen. Sheridan had formed a compact mass of men across the pike, Custer on the extreme right to harass and worry the enemy until Sheridan should create a panic with the rest of the line.

This plan, so simple in its conception, worked like a charm, and was successful beyond all expectation. The enemy's left overlapped Sheridan's right. Taking advantage of this, they turned the overlapping portion on Sheridan's flank, causing momentary confusion in the line. This, however, was quickly righted by a counter-charge of Gen. McMillan's Brigade into the angle thus formed, the flanking party were hurled back and partly cut off.

Charge of the Cavalry.

At the same time Custer, coming in from Middle Marsh River, formed for the charge, his gallant troopers drawing sabers, hurling the entire "Red-neck" Division upon the rebel left, sabering without mercy, tracing the veteran First Cavalry Division; sturdy old Tom Devin, with pipe in mouth, riding at the head of his gallant Sabre Brigade, hurling like a thunderbolt the tremendous on the enemy's right into the melee infernal—

"With the bay of the trumpet
The cavalry come!
Sharp clank the steel scabbards,
The bridge chains ring.
And foam from red nostrils
The wild chargers fling.
One hand on the saber
And one on the rein.
The troopers dash forward,
As rings the word 'Gallop!'
The steel scabbards clank
And each trooper presses
To a horse's hot flank.
'Charge!' thunders the leader.
Like shaft from the bow
Each and every is hurled
On the wavering line.
A thousand bright sabers
Are gleaming in air;
A thousand dark horses
Are dashed over the square;
Restless and reckless
Of ought may betide,
Like demons, not mortals,
The wild troopers ride."

The Whole Line Advances.

At the same time Sheridan's whole line went forward in grand style, riding everything before it. The enemy on some parts of the line were strongly posted behind stone fences and trees, proving of but little avail. The Sixth Corps sprang forward from the cannon's mouth, the other corps vying in impetuosity. By this time Crook's command had been reorganized, going forward with a hearty good will, fully proving that the reverses of the morning were no fault of theirs. It seemed scarcely credible that the men who were beaten in the morning were the same who charged so splendidly in the afternoon.

The enemy were not idle. They opened upon the charging columns with 50 pieces of artillery, which were hurled with terrible precision into the solid mass of advancing Union cavalry and infantry. The Union batteries were nobly doing their duty; over the hills and through the thickets of the Shenandoah valley, Sheridan, seeing a battery favorably posted, turned to one of his Aids, saying: "Ride down to Capt. Martin, and tell him to fire faster. The message is: 'Don't let them get a shot without interval; once, and only once, did our men falter. That was when subjected to a murderous fire from behind a hill. A heavy shower of shot from our line, and the Johnnies were on the run, though not all of them—the ground was strewn with the dead and the dying. The enemy now became a miserable rabble, and, without their arms, everything, to get away from their pursuers. They were in mortal dread of Sheridan's Cavalry. Under the Third Cavalry Division, crossing Cedar Creek at Ford west of the pike; Merritt, with the First Cavalry Division, east of the pike, just before dark, pressed the routed mass of the enemy into the strong position of Fisher's Hill, having driven them about 10 miles. The cavalry were busy all night in securing the trophies of battle. The road from Cedar Creek to Fishers Hill, a distance of three miles, was perfect jam of ambulances, artillery, caissons and wagons.

An officer of the Second Brigade First Cavalry Division, rode up to Sheridan's headquarters, when the following dialogue ensued:

Captured Guns.
Officer—General, I have come for a brigade of infantry to hold the captured artillery, of which I believe we have 20 pieces.
Sheridan—I don't believe it. Who are you?
Officer—I'm Capt. L. B. Britton, 1st N. Y. Dragoons, Second Brigade, First Division. General, if I don't believe we have over 40 pieces.
Sheridan—Captain, you shall have the captured guns. Can any of my staff give this officer anything to drink?
Officer—Well, General, that would suit me bully.
Gen. Merritt, Custer and Devin coming into Sheridan's headquarters at Belle Grove, reported their great successes. Sheridan caught them in his arms, embraced them, dancing around for joy. Other general officers coming in, each in turn reporting his successes, showed that the victory was complete. What in the morning looked so dark was now turning into splendid victory. Rations were being supplied, the supply train 20 miles in rear; but who cared for rations? We were not hungry; doubtless had we been defeated we should have been afflicted with a voracious appetite.

Daylight showed that the enemy's artillery and transportation was in our hands. They left everything behind in their flight, their dead unbled and their wounded uncared for. This battle ended campaigning in the Shenandoah Valley. This had been a race-course for both armies, neither holding possession of the ground.

(Continued on page two.)

SHERIDAN'S RIDE

From Martinsburg to Cedar Creek, Va., Oct. 18 and 19, 1864.

Snatching Victory From Defeat at Cedar Creek.

By Maj. W. H. SPERA, 17th Pa. Cav., Commanding Sheridan's Escort, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

On the evening of Oct. 15, 1864, I was directed to proceed from Winchester, Va., to Martinsburg, a distance of 22 miles, with 200 men of my regiment, the 17th Pa. Cav. I arrived at Martinsburg about midnight, reporting to Gen. Seward, son of Secretary Seward, going into bivouac near the town.

Early on the morning of the 18th, on reporting to Gen. Seward, I was ordered to report to Gen. Sheridan for escort duty, the General having arrived from Washington, D. C., during the night, and desired to go to the front at once. The party consisted of Gen. Sheridan, Col. Thos. and Alexander at the Engineer Corps; Lieut. Col. James W. Forsyth, Chief of Staff; Maj. George A. Forsyth and Capt. Joseph O'Keefe. The General rode his black horse, "Rienzi." My command was reinforced by 300 remounts, commanded by a Lieutenant.

Leaving Martinsburg.
The column left Martinsburg about 8 a. m. Strong advance and rear guards and flankers were thrown out. At Bunker Hill, 11 miles from Martinsburg, the horses of the command were watered from a brook crossing the pike.

At Winchester, the order was given for this sharp lookout was kept for roving bands of Mosby's guerrillas, who claimed this section of country as their field of operations. The General and staff remained for the night in the headquarters of Winchester, with orders to be in readiness to march at 5 a. m. the next morning.

About 4:30 on the morning of the 19th "boots and saddles" was sounded for the escort. About this time firing was heard in the direction of the front, which was attributed to a reconnaissance which had been made the night before, though we could plainly hear that the firing was coming our way, and if it was due to a reconnaissance our troops were certainly getting the worst of it.

Sheridan Joins the Escort.
About 9 a. m. Gen. Sheridan came riding leisurely along inquiring of us about the firing. We replied that we first heard it between 4 and 5 o'clock, and that it seemed to be coming our way. The escort moved out with strong advance and rear guard and flankers. About a mile south of Middletown a column of a train from the front was encountered, whipping to the rear, and a number of men from the front, giving a different interpretation to the firing heard in the morning. All trains coming from the front and going to the rear were ordered into park at Middletown. My command was ordered to form to right of road. Here an officer from the front was met, Col. Wood, Sheridan's Chief Commissary, giving the startling information that the Confederates had attacked early in the morning, driving our troops at every point, our left being first attacked and driven in considerable confusion, everything captured. Gen. Sheridan's headquarters gone, and troops dispersing in all directions. It was plainly to be seen that the Union line was being broken, and his every movement gave evidence of quick-determined action.

I was ordered to take 20 of my best men and horses and follow the General as "he intends to move to the front." I ordered three sets of fours from the right to ride out, Lieut. John Paul accompanying me. Maj. George A. Forsyth and Capt. Joseph O'Keefe accompanied the General. The remainder of the escort was ordered to report to Col. James W. Forsyth, who, with Col. Thos. and Alexander, was left behind to form a cordon across the country to stop the fugitives.

The General struck out at a brisk pace toward the scene of action. At this time the pike was so crowded with troops and wagons that the General and

himself to urge them on, as he feared an attack before his troops would be in readiness or the line formed. About this time Gen. Wright, who had been in command during Sheridan's absence, came up, giving an account of the battle in the morning. He—Wright—had been struck in the chin, which was bleeding, and he was very much distressed with blood. Wright then took command of his corps—Sixth and Getty's—returning to his division—Second, Sixth Corps.

By this time a formidable body of men stood ready to dispute the advance of a victory-flushed foe. For over two hours there was a lull in the battle, during which the enemy were returning to their commands. Troops were going into position as rapidly as circumstances would permit. They felt they were acting under a master hand.

Sheridan went east of the pike to observe the movements of the enemy, where he saw them preparing for the attack. He—Sheridan—rode along the entire front of the infantry line of battle, hat in hand, and from the cheering the enemy must have thought that our army had been heavily reinforced. Soon after the enemy could be seen moving to the attack from a point on Sheridan's left. Corps commanders were at

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By this time a formidable body of men stood ready to dispute the advance of a victory-flushed foe. For over two hours there was a lull in the battle, during which the enemy were returning to their commands. Troops were going into position as rapidly as circumstances would permit. They felt they were acting under a master hand.

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